

[7th February 1924]

(c) whether it is a fact that the Government have already announced their intention to remove the above practice of village magistrates confining human beings in stocks; and

(d) if so, whether the Government will be pleased to furnish a copy of the Government Order?

A.—In November 1923, the Government received a representation from the President of the South Indian Depressed Classes Society in which it was alleged that one Mr. Seerangan had been confined in the stocks in a village called Bommanapadi in the Perambalur taluk of Trichinopoly district, some time in May last. This is presumably the case referred to, but if so the hon. Member appears to be wrong as to his dates. The Government were unable to discover the truth of the matter after such a long interval of time and informed the President of the Society accordingly. They have also informed the President that the punishment of confinement in the stocks was abolished by the Village Courts (Amendment) Act, 1919, and they have issued instructions more than once in the past to prevent the infliction of this form of punishment by those who are apparently not aware of the change in the law.

Condition of the beggars in Madras.

242 Q.—Mr. L. C. GURUSWAMI: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(a) the number of beggars put up by the Madras Police before the Presidency Magistrates during the current year, and how many of them have been (i) fined, (ii) sent to jail and (iii) acquitted;

(b) what action the Government have taken to prohibit those beggars who have been discharged from further begging; and

(c) if they propose to start a work-house or a poor-house to put an end to the beggar nuisance in the City of Madras?

A.—(a) The number of beggars put up before the Presidency Magistrates during the year was 139
 (i) The number of them fined was 88
 (ii) „ sent to jail was 39
 (iii) „ acquitted was 12

(b) & (c) No effective action can be taken in the absence of a beggars' home or poor-house, for which sufficient funds are not at present available.

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTIYAR:—“ May I ask whether the Government propose to make any provision at least in the next Budget for either starting a work-house themselves or amply subventing the Corporation of Madras if one is started by that body? ”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—“ If the Corporation embarks on that philanthropic enterprise, I am sure that the purse-strings of my hon. Colleague will be loosened.”

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTIYAR:—“ Pending that, may I ask whether the Government will suspend the prosecution of these beggars? ”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—“ It was in response to a number of appeals published in the newspapers that this was a tremendous nuisance that the system of prosecutions was inaugurated.”

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Mr. M. RATNASWAMI :—“ Am I to understand that the answer to the supplementary question is to the effect that if the Corporation put forward proposals, the Government would be pleased to render some aid? I want the hon. the Finance Member to reply to my question, Sir.”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ I would refer the hon. Gentleman to Devolution Rule No. 31.”

Mr. M. RATNASWAMI :—“ Will the hon. Member kindly quote it? ”

Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTIYAR :—“ Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government request the hon. the Finance Member for such a grant to the Corporation? ”

The hon. the RAJA OF PANAGAL :—“ The question will be considered, Sir.”

Arrest of a French subject.

243 Q.—Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR : Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(1) the circumstances that led to the arrest in December last at the Villupuram Railway station of one Nagaratnam, a French subject, residing in Pondicherry, *en route* to Madras and the grounds on which his remand was applied for and granted ;

(2) the duration of his remand and the accusation, if any, made against him ;

(3) the result of investigation, if any, made since his remand ;

(4) the reasons for dropping the proceedings against him and releasing him ; and to lay on the table the papers touching him ;

(5) whether it is a fact that the said Nagaratnam requested the magistrate to send him back to Pondicherry under escort and the magistrate declined to accede to the said request ; and

(6) whether any attempt was made to ascertain from the French authorities his antecedents and character ?

A.—(1) The individual was behaving in a suspicious manner and attempting to conceal himself when the police arrested him. Papers found on him showed that he was an associate of dangerous revolutionaries ; when questioned by the police, he failed to give a satisfactory account of himself. He was therefore arrested under section 55, Criminal Procedure Code.

(2) He was in remand from 30th November 1923 to 13th December 1923. The accusation made against him is mentioned in clause (1) above.

(3) The Government have no information.

(4) He was released because the police could not submit the final report by the 13th December 1923. The papers cannot be placed on the table.

(5) The Government have no information.

(6) No.